





AS WE PREPARED

to celebrate the Lied Center's 25th anniversary throughout the 2018–2019 season, our goal was to create an indelible sense of community. It was decided that an anchor of this milestone season would be the debut of a new work. To avoid commissioning a piece that would be mostly forgotten after its premiere, we found inspiration in KU basketball. For the vast network of Kansas Jayhawks worldwide, there is a singular reverence for the sport. ESPN analyst Jay Bilas observed, "If you love basketball; if you love and respect the history of the game, every road leads back to Lawrence, Kansas."

As a member of the Jazz at Lincoln Center family since 2000, I knew many members of the JLCO loved hoops, was aware of David Stern's service on the board, and had heard Wynton philosophize

about the parallels between jazz and basketball. So, in 2015, we pitched the idea of commissioning each member of the JLCO to compose a movement in a collective suite honoring 15 KU basketball luminaries. Wynton and JALC's Concerts & Touring team agreed to pursue what would eventually become *Rock Chalk Suite*.

Our work within the KU community then began in earnest. Through extremely heated discussions, an advisory committee established a list of over 60 KU basketball luminaries before paring it down to 15. We then worked to engage individual sponsors for each of the 15 movements. The net proceeds of the commission would go towards our Expanding Performing Arts Access initiative, an endowed fund that enables all 10,000 Lawrence Public School students to annually attend an age-specific performance for free. There was no precedent for a project of this nature, and the combination of the JLCO and Kansas basketball proved to be compelling to our community. We promised each sponsor one thing: the JLCO would approach this project with the deepest sense of integrity.

The JLCO's residency at the Lied Center took place October 9–11 in 2018 and included two Jazz for Young People



“Who is Thelonious Monk?” programs for all 3000 middle-schoolers in the Lawrence district the morning before the premiere. Later that day, members of the JLCO visited historic Phog Allen Fieldhouse and were greeted by KU’s head coach (and Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame member) Bill Self and his staff. Even KU alum and NBA champion Wayne Simien greeted the musicians and was very curious and collegial. Coach Self allowed the orchestra members to shoot some baskets on the historic court, and after the shoot-around the musicians examined Dr. James Naismith’s typed “13 Original Rules of Basket Ball.” It was a particularly powerful moment for Chris Crenshaw, who composed “The Y’s Guy” for Dr. Naismith and used a 13-bar form as part of his composition.

That evening, the JLCO met with commission sponsors, honorees, and their families. Over and over again, commission sponsors and associates of the honorees would remark how impressed they were with the intense research each JLCO member conducted on their respective KU legend. The seriousness of intent was felt by all, and the JLCO was now officially part of our community, even before anyone beyond the band had heard one note of the new work. These very personal,

communal interactions perfectly set the stage for the world premiere of *Rock Chalk Suite* the next night.

The October 11 performance kicked off with the Voice of the Jayhawks, Brian Hanni, introducing each member of the JLCO as if he were announcing the starting lineup before a game at Allen Fieldhouse. The feeling in the house was electric. As each composer introduced their movement, the audience co-signed as key statistics and seminal moments in Kansas basketball history were mentioned. The diversity and sophistication of the music itself left the audience mesmerized. Victor Goines surprised everyone at the conclusion of the performance by including KU’s fight song in his composition “The Shot,” which honors Mario Chalmers. It proved to be the perfect celebratory ending to the evening.

Directly following the concert, we agreed that *Rock Chalk Suite* had to be properly recorded. There was no question that this artistic content would have a profound and lasting impact on our community. Jazz at Lincoln Center was now firmly etched into the mythology of this town and the University of Kansas.



Over the next few months, our two institutions worked diligently to carve out some time in the JLCO's hectic schedule for recording *Rock Chalk Suite* in the House of Swing, Frederick P. Rose Hall.

In the meantime, Wynton addressed KU's men's basketball team during their visit to New York for the NIT Season Tip-Off. On Thanksgiving morning, November 22, 2018, Wynton delivered a fiery talk elaborating upon the concepts of energy and breathing; the value of listening; the art of conscious repetition; the power of the collective; the supremacy of the invisible; respecting and embracing your opposition; and, finally, the transcendence of love. It was fantastic and profound. The next

night, KU beat #5 ranked Tennessee in overtime to win the tournament.

Finally, in April of 2019, we recorded *Rock Chalk Suite*. Wynton graciously invited the supporters of the commission to attend the historic sessions in NYC. Jazz at Lincoln Center's amazing hospitality made the entire Kansas contingent feel like we were attending a family reunion.

Wynton set the tone at the top of the first rehearsal when he welcomed everyone to the House of Swing. He also encouraged us to attend shows at Dizzy's Club, which hosted groups led by Elliot Mason and Sherman Irby on consecutive nights. KU luminary and 10-year NBA veteran Walt Wesley and his wife Denise were in town and were particularly moved by the fact that Mason fought through illness to ensure his movement—"Walt's Waltz"—was recorded well. At Dizzy's, Irby performed a one-of-a-kind arrangement of "Sweet Georgia Brown" that brought all-time great Lynette Woodard and her family to tears. The first female ever to be invited to join the Harlem Globetrotters, Woodard had heard this tune a million times—but never quite like this.



On Saturday, April 13, the last day of the recording session, Woodard and Wesley spoke on behalf of the Kansas contingent and expressed their deepest gratitude for this once-in-a-lifetime experience. There is no question that this project, built upon the foundation of great jazz music, has created a stronger sense of community in Kansas, in NYC, and for all of Jayhawk nation. We are truly grateful to Wynton and the entire Jazz at Lincoln Center family for their remarkable collaboration. Rock Chalk!

—DEREK KWAN

Executive Director, Lied Center of Kansas



Learn the stories behind the songs
from the JLCO's composers at
jazz.org/rockchalkstories

1. THE Y'S GUY (4:18)

for James Naismith

Composed by Chris Crenshaw

Solos: Dan Nimmer (piano),

Wynton Marsalis (trumpet),

Chris Crenshaw (trombone)

2. JO JO'S MOJO (3:59)

for Jo Jo White

Composed by Marcus Printup

Solos: Charles Gould (drums),

Elliot Mason (trombone), Ted Nash (alto

saxophone), Chris Crenshaw (trombone),

Marcus Printup (trumpet)

3. PHOG ALLEN (3:55)

for Phog Allen

Composed by Ted Nash

Solo: Camille Thurman (tenor saxophone)

4. THE FIRST LADY: LYRICAL LYNETTE (4:17)

for Lynette Woodard

Composed by Wynton Marsalis

Solos: Sherman Irby (alto saxophone),

Ted Nash (flute), Ryan Kisor (trumpet),

Dan Nimmer (piano)

5. C. B.'S THEME (4:16)

for Charlie B. Black

Composed by Dan Nimmer

Arranged by Carlos Henriquez

Solo: Dan Nimmer (piano)

6. D(EFENSE)-UP: THE UNTOLD STORY OF DARNELL VALENTINE (3:55)

for Darnell Valentine

Composed by Victor Goines

Solos: Charles Gould (drums), Wynton Marsalis

(trumpet), Victor Goines (tenor saxophone),

Sherman Irby (alto saxophone)

7. THE TRUTH (4:10)

for Paul Pierce

Composed by Sherman Irby

Solos: Ryan Kisor (trumpet), Chris Crenshaw

(vocals), Paul Nedzela (baritone saxophone),

Vincent Gardner (trombone)

8. WALT'S WALTZ (4:59)

for Walt Wesley

Composed by Elliot Mason

Arranged by Carlos Henriquez

Solos: Ted Nash (alto saxophone),

Elliot Mason (trombone), Victor Goines

(clarinet), Paul Nedzela (baritone saxophone)

9. MIRACLES (3:51)

for Danny Manning

Composed by Vincent Gardner

Solos: Ted Nash (soprano saxophone),
Charles Gould (drums)

10. THIRD QUARTER (4:49)

for Nick Collison

Composed by Paul Nedzela

Arranged by Chris Crenshaw

Solos: Carlos Henriquez (bass),
Vincent Gardner (trombone)

11. PASSING GAME (3:34)

for Bill Hougland

Composed by Kenny Rampton

Solos: Kenny Rampton (trumpet), Victor Goines
(tenor saxophone), Ted Nash (alto saxophone),
Elliot Mason (trombone), Charles Gould (drums)

12. I CRY BEFORE MY COUNTRY, I LEAP ACROSS ITS SEAS (3:58)

for Wilt Chamberlain

Composed by Wynton Marsalis

Solos: Sherman Irby (alto saxophone),
Kenny Rampton (trumpet), Marcus Printup
(trumpet), Wynton Marsalis (trumpet)

13. WIGGINS IN 6/8 (4:25)

for Andrew Wiggins

Composed by Carlos Henriquez

Solos: Paul Nedzela (baritone saxophone),
Dan Nimmer (piano)

14. THE PONDEROUS PACHYDERM OF THE PLANKS (4:19)

for Clyde Lovellette

Composed by Sherman Irby

Solos: Carlos Henriquez (bass),
Chris Crenshaw (trombone), Elliot Mason
(trombone), Vincent Gardner (trombone)

15. THE SHOT for Mario Chalmers I'M A JAYHAWK (THE KU FIGHT SONG) (4:59)

"The Shot"

Composed by Victor Goines

Solos: Sherman Irby (alto saxophone),
Wynton Marsalis (trumpet), Ted Nash
(alto saxophone), Chris Crenshaw (trombone),
Marcus Printup (trumpet), Camille Thurman
(tenor saxophone), Kenny Rampton (trumpet),
Sam Chess (trombone), Ryan Kisor (trumpet),
Vincent Gardner (trombone)

"I'm a Jayhawk (The KU Fight Song)"

MPL Music Publishing Inc. OBO Edwin H. Morris
& Co. (ASCAP)

Composed by George "Dumpy" Bowles

THE JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER ORCHESTRA WITH WYNTON MARSALIS

2018–19 Concert Season

REEDS

Sherman Irby — alto and soprano saxophones, flute, clarinet

Ted Nash — alto and soprano saxophones, flute, clarinet, piccolo

Victor Goines — tenor and soprano saxophones, Bb and bass clarinets, tambourine

Walter Blanding — tenor saxophone†

***Camille Thurman** — tenor and soprano saxophones, clarinet

Paul Nedzela — baritone and soprano saxophones, bass clarinet

TRUMPETS

***Ryan Kisor**

Kenny Rampton

Marcus Printup

Wynton Marsalis

TROMBONES

Vincent Gardner

Chris Crenshaw (additional vocals, track 7)

Elliot Mason (tracks 1–8, 10–14)

***Sam Chess** (tracks 9 and 15)

RHYTHM SECTION

Dan Nimmer — piano

Carlos Henriquez — bass

***Charles Goold** — drums

***Taurien “TJ” Reddick** — percussion

**Indicates substitute orchestra member*

†Did not perform on this recording

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER WYNTON MARSALIS

CO-PRODUCERS The Lied Center of Kansas under the direction of Derek Kwan; Todd Whitelock

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Recording Engineers

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ProTools Engineer

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Assistant Engineer

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Wes Whitelock

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MOVEMENT SPONSORS

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David Booth

2. Jo Jo White

Scott & Linda Robinson and
Chris & Jane Fevurly

3. Phog Allen

John & Rosy Elmore

4. Lynette Woodard

In honor of Renate Mai-Dalton,
Venkat & Neeli Bendapudi

5. Charlie B. Black

Cathy L. Daicoff

6. Darnell Valentine

Steve & Chris Edmonds

7. Paul Pierce

Cathy Reinhardt

8. Walt Wesley

Roland & Joanne Hurst

9. Danny Manning

Danny & Julie Manning

10. Nick Collison

Catherine Holland

11. Bill Houglund

Brad & Linda Sanders

12. Wilt Chamberlain

Beverly Smith Billings

13. Andrew Wiggins

Jeff & Mary Weinberg

14. Clyde Lovellette

Jon & Vicki Jamison

15. Mario Chalmers

Miles & Paula Schnaer







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The mission of Jazz at Lincoln Center is to entertain,
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through performance, education, and advocacy.

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